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Viewing cable 08MANAGUA776, BIO REPORT: UNGA PRESIDENT-ELECT, MIGUEL D'ESCOTO

If you are new to these pages, please read an introduction on the [structure of a cable](#) as well as how to [discuss them](#) with others. See also the [FAQs](#)

Understanding cables

Every cable message consists of three parts:

- The top box shows each cables unique reference number, when and by whom it originally was sent, and what its initial classification was.
- The middle box contains the header information that is associated with the cable. It includes information about the receiver(s) as well as a general subject.
- The bottom box presents the body of the cable. The opening can contain a more specific subject, references to other cables ([browse by origin](#) to find them) or additional comment. This is followed by the main contents of the cable: a summary, a collection of specific topics and a comment section.

To understand the justification used for the classification of each cable, please use this [WikiSource](#) article as reference.

Discussing cables

If you find meaningful or important information in a cable, please link directly to its unique reference number. Linking to a specific paragraph in the body of a cable is also possible by copying the appropriate link (to be found at the paragraph symbol). Please mark messages for social networking services like Twitter with the hash tags **#cablegate** and a hash containing the reference ID e.g. **#08MANAGUA776**.

Reference ID	Created	Released	Classification	Origin
08MANAGUA776	2008-06-17 21:36	2011-08-30 01:44	SECRET//NOFORN	Embassy Managua

Appears in these articles:

<http://www.nacion.com/2011-05-30/Mundo/NotasSecundarias/Mundo2758456.aspx>
<http://www.nacion.com/2011-05-30/Mundo/NotasSecundarias/Mundo2758467.aspx>
<http://www.nacion.com/2011-05-30/Mundo/NotasSecundarias/Mundo2758468.aspx>
<http://www.nacion.com/2011-05-30/Mundo/NotasSecundarias/Mundo2758464.aspx>
<http://www.confidencial.com.ni/articulo/4103/la-embusa-y-el-gabinete-de-ortega>
<http://www.confidencial.com.ni/articulo/4104/d-rsquo-escoto-en-onu-ldquo-un-desafio-de-ortega-a-ee-uu-rdquo>
<http://www.confidencial.com.ni/articulo/4102/estrada-y-la-ldquo-doble-cara-rdquo-ante-ee-uu>
<http://www.confidencial.com.ni/articulo/3966/la-ldquo-injerencia-rdquo-de-ee-uu-en-el-2006>
<http://www.nacion.com/2011-05-23/Mundo/Relacionados/Mundo2758764.aspx>
<http://www.nacion.com/2011-05-23/Mundo/NotaPrincipal/Mundo2758753.aspx>
<http://www.confidencial.com.ni/articulo/4041/millones-de-dolares-sin-control-y-a-disolucion>
<http://www.confidencial.com.ni/articulo/4040/la-ldquo-injerencia-rdquo-de-venezuela-en-2006>
<http://www.confidencial.com.ni/articulo/4047/rodrigo-barreto-enviado-de-ldquo-vacaciones-rdquo>
<http://www.nacion.com/2011-05-16/Mundo/NotasSecundarias/Mundo2757239.aspx>
<http://www.nacion.com/2011-05-16/Mundo/NotaPrincipal/Mundo2746658.aspx>
<http://www.nacion.com/2011-05-16/Mundo/Relacionados/Mundo2757244.aspx>
<http://www.nacion.com/2011-05-16/Mundo/Relacionados/Mundo2746673.aspx>
<http://www.confidencial.com.ni/articulo/3991/dra-yadira-centeno-desmiente-cable-diplomatico-eeuu>
<http://www.confidencial.com.ni/articulo/3968/pellas-pronostico-a-eeuu-victoria-de-ortega-en-2006>
<http://www.confidencial.com.ni/articulo/3967/barreto-era-ldquo-fuente-confiable-rdquo-para-eeuu>

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OO RUEHLMC RUEHROV
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FM AMEMBASSY MANAGUA
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 2767
RUEHSUN/USUN ROME IT IMMEDIATE 0011
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK IMMEDIATE
RUEHUNV/USMISSION UNVIE VIENNA IMMEDIATE
RUEHG/USMISSION GENEVA IMMEDIATE 0365
INFO RUEHMU/WESTERN HEMISPHERIC AFFAIRS DIPL POSTS IMMEDIATE
RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING IMMEDIATE 0079
RUEHRL/AMEMBASSY BERLIN IMMEDIATE 0137
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON IMMEDIATE 0097
RUEHMD/AMEMBASSY MADRID IMMEDIATE 0487
RUEHME/AMEMBASSY MEXICO IMMEDIATE 5311
RUEHMO/AMEMBASSY MOSCOW IMMEDIATE 0177
RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI IMMEDIATE 0008
RUEHOT/AMEMBASSY OTTAWA IMMEDIATE 0251
RUEHFR/AMEMBASSY PARIS IMMEDIATE 0044
RUEHRO/AMEMBASSY ROME IMMEDIATE 0142
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO IMMEDIATE 0217
RUEHROV/AMEMBASSY VATICAN IMMEDIATE
RUMIAAA/CDR USSOUTHCOM MIAMI FL//J2/J3/J5// IMMEDIATE
RUEHIN/AIT TAIPEI IMMEDIATE 0094
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC IMMEDIATE
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHINGTON DC IMMEDIATE
RUEHLMC/MILLENNIUM CHALLENGE CORP WASHDC IMMEDIATE
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHINGTON DC IMMEDIATE
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHINGTON DC IMMEDIATE
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC IMMEDIATE
RUEHBS/USEU BRUSSELS IMMEDIATE
RHEHAAA/WHITE HOUSE WASHDC IMMEDIATE

S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 04 MANAGUA 000776

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DEPT FOR WHA/CEN
DEPT ALSO FOR USOAS
DEPT FOR INR/IAA - EMERSON

E.O. 12958: DECL: 06/16/2018
TAGS: PINR PREL UNGA NU
SUBJECT: BIO REPORT: UNGA PRESIDENT-ELECT, MIGUEL D'ESCOTO BROCKMANN

REF: A. MANAGUA 500 AND PREVIOUS (NOTAL)
1B. USUN 134 AND PREVIOUS (NOTAL)
1C. 2007 MANAGUA 2008 (NOTAL)

Classified By: Ambassador Paul A. Trivelli for reasons 1.4 (b) & (d)

11. (C) SUMMARY. On June 4 Miguel Jeronimo d'Escoto Brockmann of Nicaragua, a seventy-five-year-old U.S.-born and -educated, Maryknoll Catholic priest, was elected by acclamation to be President of the 63rd UN General Assembly (UNGA). His election, as the sole candidate from the Latin America Group (GRULAC), was the culmination of a carefully planned, year-long campaign by the Government of Nicaragua (GON) to install the former Sandinista Foreign Minister. However, despite the GON's careful election campaign, d'Escoto's aloof personal manner, his repeated and gratuitous anti-U.S. outbursts, as well as his serious health problems, may cloud his tenure as UNGA President.

12. (C) Miguel Jeronimo d'Escoto Brockmann was born in Hollywood, California on February 5, 1933. His father, Miguel d'Escoto Munoz, was a Nicaraguan diplomat who later served as Nicaragua's ambassador to Rome (1955), Tokyo (1972), Paris and the United Nations. The elder d'Escoto was nicknamed "The Count" and universally considered a flamboyant larger-than-life figure with a taste for the finer things in life. (At the time of Miguel's Jr.'s birth, his father was in Hollywood aspiring to be a film mogul.) He made a considerable fortune in Nicaragua selling rather questionable

oil concessions with the connivance of President Somoza and his family. In fact, Somoza was d'Escoto Brockmann's godfather. Although Miguel's family returned to Nicaragua shortly after his birth, between 1947 and 1961, he went back to the United States to study, mainly at schools connected to the Catholic Maryknoll Order. In early 1951, during a return trip to Nicaragua he gave up his U.S. Citizenship. D'Escoto earned a B.A. (1956) from St. Mary's College (Glen Ellen, Illinois) and an M.A. (1961) from the Maryknoll Seminary (Ossining, New York) and was ordained into the Order the same year. In 1962, he completed an M.A. in journalism from Columbia University. D'Escoto describes his family as privileged, with a history of rebellion. Miguel's brother, Francisco, also a diplomat, served with his father in Tokyo and later returned as Ambassador himself. Francisco also served in the Nicaraguan Embassy in Washington and was the Sandinista Ambassador to London (1984-87) and Lisbon (in 1987).

¶3. (S/NF) Some interlocutors have described him as sophisticated and well-educated, and in the past, Embassy officials have found him capable of arguing adroitly while avoiding being pinned down by specifics. He has also been described as arrogant, condescending and patronizing. D'Escoto prefers to conduct meetings in Spanish, although he speaks fluent English and understands some Italian and French.

¶4. (C) D'Escoto has a long history of social and political activism, spending much of the 1960s working on housing and

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social issues in Chile's poorest barrios. During self-imposed exile to New York in the 1970s, d'Escoto served as Director of Communications for the Maryknoll Order, where he established ORBIS Publications, and was a founder of "Los Doce (The Twelve)" -- a group of prominent, mostly-exiled, Nicaraguan progressives, intellectuals and democratic activists who openly supported the Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN) against the Somoza regime. In 1979 d'Escoto returned permanently to Nicaragua and was named Foreign Minister, a position he held until Ortega's electoral defeat in 1990. Despite the title, during the 1980s d'Escoto functioned more as a roving ambassador than foreign minister. Policy was actually set by Vice Foreign Minister, Victor Hugo Tinoco during this period. While Foreign Minister, D'Escoto received the Lenin Peace Prize for 1985-86 and the Thomas Merton Award for 1987.

(U) Censured by the Catholic Church

¶5. (C) The appointment as Foreign Minister placed d'Escoto in conflict with the Vatican. In 1981, Pope John Paul II ordered d'Escoto to resign his government position. D'Escoto refused and, during a 1983 papal visit, the Pontiff publicly censured d'Escoto and prohibited him from performing priestly duties. The ban is still in effect; however, unlike Nicaragua's Cardinal Miguel Obando y Bravo, d'Escoto was never defrocked. Foreign Ministry staff still -- and almost reverently -- refers to him as &Padre (Father) d'Escoto.⁸ We have occasionally been corrected for failing to use the title.

¶6. (C/NF) We also note that d'Escoto's personal life has long been rumored to be characterized by aberrant behavior -- including pedophilia and necrophilia. We cannot judge the truth of these rumors, but they do abound among the chattering classes. We can relate one story, which we do believe to be true. A local businessman has told us that while inspecting his family homestead, then-recently recovered as a property that had been confiscated by the FSLN, he saw d'Escoto peering nervously over the wall from the adjoining home. The next day, upon returning to his house, the businessman noticed new planting had been done in a small garden on his property. After inspection, he discovered the garden hid a trapdoor entry to a series of extensive cement tunnels bored into the mountain and

connected to several underground prison cells. The guards at the house reported that the d'Escoto gardeners had come and planted the new greenery earlier that same day.

(C) A Love-Hate Relationship with the United States

¶7. (S/NF) D'Escoto's original appointment as Foreign Minister surprised many. In 1979, he was viewed as moderate, even pro-U.S. in his views. Early in his tenure he reportedly pressed for flexibility towards the United States; however, by 1983 he had become highly critical of "U.S. intransigence" and claimed the United States was the cause of all Central America's ills. Knowledgeable Embassy contacts

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have suggested that this behavior may indicate that d'Escoto felt personally and professionally rebuffed by U.S. "unwillingness" to engage with the Sandinista government during the 1980s.

¶8. (S/NF) He has continued to speak against the United States alleging that Americans "are worse terrorists than any other." In August of 2007, d'Escoto's anti-U.S. public statements reached new levels when he dismissed the gravity of the September 11th attacks. During an August 13 speech President Ortega said that the 3,000 deaths in New York on September 11th were "insignificant" compared to the "acts of U.S. genocide" in Hiroshima and Nagasaki that killed 120,000.

The next morning, during a TV interview, d'Escoto opined that Ortega had been "very moderate" (muy suave) because he had only included the number of immediate deaths in Japan, not the total number of those who died as a result of "genocidal" atomic bombs, "which was five times that number."

We also note the title of d'Escoto's April 3, 2006 op-ed piece in Nuevo Diario -- "Trivelli: Is he an idiot or does he just act that way?"

¶9. (C/NF) Despite his anti-U.S. statements, d'Escoto still seems to hold a deep respect for American ideals of liberty and freedom. He told Embassy officials that two of his four "life heroes" are Americans) Martin Luther King, Jr. and Mother Mary Joseph Rogers, founder of the Maryknoll Sisters. (The other two are Russian author Fyodor Dostoyevsky and Mahatma Ghandi. According to Embassy officials, he has large portraits of all four prominently displayed in the dining room of his home).

(C) SERIOUS MEDICAL ISSUE

¶10. (S/NF) It has also been noted by Embassy officials that d'Escoto is prone to unpredictable behavior, at once being very calm and collected, and the next moment angrily denouncing the United States. This is perhaps due to his medical condition.

¶11. (C/NF) D'Escoto suffers from Meniere's disease (mun-YAIRZ), an inner ear disorder that affects balance and hearing. The cause of the condition is unknown, but may be related to a fluid imbalance in the inner ear. In a September 2007 meeting with Embassy officers, d'Escoto complained that his ear problems limited his ability to hear, walk, and maintain his balance. He is constantly attended by aides, at least one of whom is also an ex-priest. D'Escoto appears to have lost hearing in his left ear -- he positions interlocutors so that his right ear is nearest them -- and the condition now affects his right ear and could result in permanent hearing loss. While there is no known cause or cure for the condition, some medications can alleviate the vertigo and nausea attacks. D'Escoto is covered by Maryknoll Order medical insurance and periodically receives treatment for his condition in the United States.

(U) The Road to UNGA: All for Naught?

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¶12. (C/NF) Nicaragua nominated d'Escoto for the position of UNGA President in August 2007 and quickly moved to obtain NAM backing and ensure there would be no other candidates nominated. However, as one senior Caribbean diplomat noted, many GRULAC nations "were not impressed by Mr. d'Escoto's curriculum vitae and there are serious questions in the group about his health." As Foreign Minister in the 1980s, d'Escoto offended and annoyed other diplomats with his harsh rhetoric and vehement tirades -- often in public, international forums. This quality has not diminished with age. In April 2008, a GRULAC Ambassador in Managua recounted a session between d'Escoto and local GRULAC Chiefs of Mission that was described as "just plain frightening." D'Escoto claimed that his mandate would be to remove the UN system from the grip of the imperialist U.S. and "completely re-order and reform" the UN and the way it treats the developing world.

¶13. (S/NF) The unpredictable behavior and gratuitous anti-U.S. attacks may prove serious impediments to d'Escoto's leadership. When calm, his statements can seem logical, but can turn unpredictable and full of ire in a matter of moments. Though these erratic mood swings may be connected to his medical condition. The combination of d'Escoto's deep loathing of the U.S., his unpredictable personal demeanor and possible lack of understanding of UN complexities may portend an administration full of conflict, ill will and squandered opportunities.

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